

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 16 and 18-22 are currently pending. Claims 12-15 and 17 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 16, 18, and 19 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, regarding a question of antecedent basis; Claims 12-15 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,098,751 to Tamura et al. (hereinafter “the ‘751 patent”); Claim 19 was indicated as allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and Claims 16, 18, and 20-22 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of Claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 19. Claim 19 has been amended to address the antecedent basis issue set forth in the outstanding Office Action.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 12-14 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of those claims.

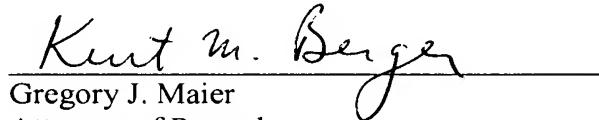
Claims 16 and 18 have been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of Claims 16 and 18, Applicant respectfully submits that those claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 15 and 17 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of those claims.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 16, 18, and 19 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over the '751 patent and are in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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